

Celebrating Your Success

A Guide to Planning a HealthierUS School Challenge Award Celebration

Montana Team Nutrition



Gallatin Gateway School Staff dress up to celebrate their Gold HUSSC award.



**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

This resource is available electronically at:

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/HealthyMT.html#

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**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Table of Contents

Introduction

Step-by-Step Guide

Appendices

Appendix A: Celebration Scheduling Form

Appendix B: Invitations

Appendix C: Menus and Recipes

Appendix D: Press Release

Appendix E: Agenda/Program

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Congratulations on receiving a HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) Award. Your school has joined an elite group of schools that have taken important steps to create a school environment that helps students develop healthy nutrition and physical activity habits. Earning an HUSSC award of any level is a significant achievement worthy of celebration.

An HUSSC celebration is an excellent opportunity to:

- Recognize the staff members and volunteers whose efforts helped your school qualify for — and receive — an HUSSC award.
- Showcase your school's commitment to wellness and explain its importance to students' academic success.
- Raise awareness of parents and community members — they will appreciate how tasty and healthy your school meals are; and that students are learning about nutrition and being physically active on a regular basis at school.
- Celebrate and reinforce the importance of school-wide wellness practices.

This guide provides tips and tools that will simplify the process of planning and hosting a successful celebration.

The first section of this Guide: *A Step By Step Guide to Planning HUSSC Award Celebration* lists each of the steps involved in planning and celebrating an HUSSC award in chronological order.

The second section of this Guide is composed of five appendices that provide samples of materials created by Montana schools that have celebrated HUSSC awards in the past.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

A Step-by-Step Guide to Celebrating an HUSSC Award

Step 1- Choose:

A: Date

B: Type of Celebration and

C: Contact Person for the HUSSC Celebration

Ideally, **allow two months to plan** and host an HUSSC celebration. This will increase the odds that a member of the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) staff, the Montana Team Nutrition staff as well as local legislators can attend the event.

Date Selection Tips:

- Choose two or three potential dates for the celebration.
- If you plan on inviting your Montana House Representative and/or Senator, remember that the Montana Legislature is in session from January - early May in odd numbered years. If your celebration will be held during the legislative season, choose a Friday as most legislators are back in their home districts on this day. (It is recommended to invite your local legislators so that they can learn/appreciate the steps you are taking to support school wellness.)

Find Your Celebration Style:

- Some schools use the HUSSC award celebration as an opportunity to showcase the healthy meals they serve each and every day.
- Others, like Townsend School, in Townsend, MT, scheduled a special assembly for students, parents and staff.
- Still other schools tie their celebration into an existing event. For example, you can celebrate your HUSSC award during one of your regularly scheduled Family Fun Nights, at a Spring Picnic, during National School Lunch or Breakfast Week, etc.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 2- Confirm Date & Details with Montana Team Nutrition

Complete the Montana Team Nutrition Contact Sheet (included in the Appendix A) *before* calling or emailing your Montana Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach. This way, you will have the entire relevant event planning information at your fingertips.

Montana Team Nutrition Staff:

Katie Bark, RD; (406) 994-5641; kbark@mt.gov

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Kelsey Gauthier, RD; (406) 690-7366; kelsey.gauthier@montana.edu

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Step 3- Make a List of Invitees

Share your success far and wide! Invite as many people to the award celebration as your school can comfortably accommodate. The typical list of invitees includes parents, volunteers, the Superintendent, school board members, the local media, and other community members and stakeholders such as major school boosters and donors. Consider inviting national, state and local legislators so they can appreciate the steps you are taking to create a healthy school environment.

Step 4- Send out Save-the-Date Cards via email

As soon as you have confirmed the date of your celebration with your School Wellness Coach, send save-the-date cards to everyone on your invite list and post the event on the school calendar.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 5- Choose a Reimbursable Menu

This is your chance to showcase the wonderful nutritious foods you serve every day. You may wish to serve the students' favorite menu, or borrow one of the creative menus from a school that has celebrated an HUSSC award in the past:

- Luther School, in Luther, Montana serves a different ethnic meal once each month. For its 2012 Gold with Distinction Award celebration luncheon, Luther School served a New Zealand menu to honor the heritage of the school's cook.
- Gallatin Gateway Schools served breakfast for lunch to emphasize the importance of breakfast to students' academic performance.
- Ponderosa School in Billings, Montana served a favorite student menu along with an A-Z salad bar.
- Some schools feature a Local Foods Lunch.

If you are holding a reception that does not include a meal, consider serving a healthy snack such as fruit kabobs. Sample menus as well as Luther School's recipes for ethnic meals are provided in Appendix C.

Step 6- Plan a Physical Activity

Incorporating physical activity into your HUSSC Award celebration is a great way to highlight the role it plays in academic success and the fact it is one of the three criteria required for an HUSSC award.

Outdoor Activities:

Field Day events such as relay and sack races, or obstacle courses have been popular ways to showcase physical activity at HUSSC celebrations. Be sure to have a backup plan in case the weather does not cooperate.

Host a school-wide walk for all students and staff to participate in.

Indoor Activities:

If space permits, an obstacle course can be set up indoors. Other indoor activities such as line or hip-hop dancing, or any choreographed dancercise routine work well. Alternatively, you can showcase Brain Gym or Mind and Body activities (these are physical activities that can be performed during the traditional lessons).

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 7- Showcase Nutrition Education

Some schools' HUSSC celebrations have featured wellness-themed skits, songs and/or poems performed by the students as a way to showcase nutrition education efforts (see the Gallatin Gateway School's HUSSC Award Program in Appendix E for ideas).

Step 8- Choose Speakers

Often the school's Principal or the Health Committee Chair serves as the master of ceremonies. Guest speakers usually include the Superintendent, the person presenting the award, legislators or other honored guests who ask or have been asked to make a brief statement.

MT OPI will try to send a staff member to each celebration. OPI staff appreciates the opportunity to speak briefly, offer congratulations and present the award certificate. If an OPI staff member is not available, MT Team Nutrition will send a representative to present the award.

Let your guest speakers know how much time you have allotted for them to speak. Remember, this celebration is for and about the students so ask speakers to keep their remarks brief.

Step 9- Confirm Speakers and Obtain Short Biographies for any Guest Speakers

Before finalizing your Agenda/Program confirm that all of the anticipated speakers are still available on the day of your presentation. Be sure to have a short biography to refer to when introducing your special guests/speakers so that you can give them a warm welcome.

Step 10- Design and Mail Formal Invitations

In addition to the date, time and location, your invitation should include the price of an adult lunch and information regarding the RSVP deadline and contact person. Invitations can be as simple as a brightly colored flyer or as formal as a printed invite on card stock. Samples of three different styles of invitations are included in Appendix B.

Step 11- Create A Press Release – Submit for Approval

Steps 11 and 12-(Program Design) should be completed 4-6 weeks ahead of time, as OPI must approve all HUSSC Award Celebration press releases and celebration agendas.

Sample press releases are included in Appendix D. Create a similar press release for you school's celebration and send it to your MT Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach so that it can start the approval process. OPI will distribute the press release to outlets per your request.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 12- Finalize Agenda and Design a Program

When developing your agenda, estimate the time needed for each portion of the event and make sure you have the correct names and titles for everyone listed in the Program. A sample Program is included in Appendix E. Submit this along with the draft Press Release, to your MT Team Nutrition contact or School Wellness Coach so that the approval process can begin. Verify with your HUSSC School contact that these items will be available the day of the event: 1) the award banner, 2) the award certificate and 3) pins (for Gold and Gold with Distinction award levels). Consider asking someone with a high quality camera to take photos of the special event.

STEP 13- Send Approved Press Release to Media

The approved press release should be sent to local media outlets according to their deadlines. In smaller communities, you may have to notify the local paper a week or more in advance. In communities with a daily paper and TV station, two days' notice would be appropriate to get coverage for your event.

MT OPI will handle the media outreach according to your preference. If you choose to have OPI send the release on your behalf, please provide OPI with a list of the media outlets you would like to have informed of your HUSSC award, and the communications director will send out the approved release on behalf of your school.

If the leadership in your school has a relationship with members of the local media, ask that person to send the approved press release to his/her media contact and to invite the media member to the celebration. When inviting members of the media, be sure to inform them of your school's policy regarding photographing students. (Consult with your Principal regarding necessary photography approvals.)

Even if OPI sends the release on your behalf, schools are encouraged to call their local media outlets 1-2 days before the event with a personal invitation to attend to help generate excitement for the event.

Step 14- Confirm Number of Luncheon Guests, Order Food

The day you send out the invitations, give the person you listed as the RSVP contact a list of the guests so s/he can easily check off people who are coming. Let the School Food Service Manager know how many guests will be eating lunch.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Step 15- Decorate

Consider decorating the cafeteria and/or auditorium with school wellness posters designed by the students. Make sure the HUSSC award banner is hung prior to the celebration; in a visible location.

Step 16- Provide a Media Kit

The day of the event, provide reporters with a small media kit (a copy of the approved Press Release, the Program, and contact information for someone at your school who can answer any questions the media member may have). Remind media members of your school's rules regarding photographing students.

Step 17- Enjoy!

Step 18- Post Approved Pictures on your school's website and bulletin board as well as in your school's newsletter.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Appendix A – HUSSC Celebration Scheduling form

Montana Office of Public Instruction and Montana Team Nutrition plan to send a representative to each HUSSC award celebration. Please complete the following chart before calling your school's Montana Team Nutrition representative to discuss celebration dates and other details.

Potential Dates and Time of Celebration (choose 2-3 potential dates):

HUSSC Celebration Coordinator's Contact Info (phone #, school's mailing address (include street address) & email address)

Mailing address for award banner, certificate and pins (for Gold and Gold of Dist.)



School Photography Policy

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Appendix B – Sample HUSSC Celebration Invitations

Invitations to your school's HUSSC Award Celebration can be as simple as a colorful flyer or as elaborate as a four-color invitation printed on card stock, or something in between. Following are three HUSSC Award Celebration invitations that were sent out by Montana schools during the 2011-12 school year.

Gallatin Gateway School District created a colorful flyer for its invitation. Luther School used Power Point to design a color invitation which was printed two to a page, landscape layout, on an 11" by 8.5" piece of card stock, then sliced in half. Schools have also sent handwritten invitations, which were well received.

<p>The Luther School 4 Luther Roscoe Road Luther, MT 59068 (406) 446-2480</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">You are cordially invited to celebrate the Luther School's Gold Award of Distinction!</p> <p>The USDA Healthier US School Challenge Award recognizes excellence in nutrition and physical activity in our nation's public schools. The Luther School is honored to receive the first Gold Award of Distinction in Montana.</p> <p>Please join the school community for an ethnic-themed luncheon to celebrate this national distinction with our school's Food Service Director, Amy Russell and the Luther School teachers and students.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On Friday, April 27, 2012 At the Luther School Luncheon at Noon Gold Award Presentation to follow</p> <p>Please RSVP by April 23rd to: Stefani Krall at (406) 446-2493 or kralls@bcbsil.com</p>	<p>The Luther School 4 Luther Roscoe Road Luther, MT 59068 (406) 446-2480</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">You are cordially invited to celebrate the Luther School's Gold Award of Distinction!</p> <p>The USDA Healthier US School Challenge Award recognizes excellence in nutrition and physical activity in our nation's public schools. The Luther School is honored to receive the first Gold Award of Distinction in Montana.</p> <p>Please join the school community for an ethnic-themed luncheon to celebrate this national distinction with our school's Food Service Director, Amy Russell and the Luther School teachers and students.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On Friday, April 27, 2012 At the Luther School Luncheon at Noon Gold Award Presentation to follow</p> <p>Please RSVP by April 23rd to: Stefani Krall at (406) 446-2493 or kralls@bcbsil.com</p>
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**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

*You're Invited to
Gallatin Gateway School
to Help Us Celebrate!*

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 10:00- 11:00am
100 Mill Street



Gallatin Gateway Elementary and Gallatin Gateway 7th/8th received prestigious, **national Healthier US School Challenge Gold Awards** in January 2012. The U.S. Department of Agriculture commends these schools for the exemplary steps, leadership and team work employed to make changes to their schools' nutrition environment; improve the quality of the foods served; provide students with more nutritious, healthy choices; and, enhance their physical activity program. The schools receive a HUSSC award plaque, a banner to display, and a small monetary incentive award (\$1500 per school for the Gold award) for meeting HUSSC's criteria.

Gallatin Gateway Schools are 1 of 11 MT schools to qualify for this award since 2006.

The school lunch menu features from-scratch, fresh food daily. The students are active each day and learn about nutrition across the curriculum. Gallatin Gateway has been a leader in school wellness for years and is excited to celebrate with a school-wide assembly and a special lunch meal on **March 6, 2012**.

Parents and community are welcome!

Each grade will participate with skits, songs, and entertainment.

National School Breakfast Week March 5-9. Please call before 8:30am if you would like to stay for lunch at 11:45am- 763-4415. Children- \$2.30 and Adults- \$3.50

You Can't Hide That Gator Pride!

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Appendix C– HUSSC Celebration Menu Ideas

Serving a typical school meal is a wonderful way to showcase the nutrition changes that have been made at your school. You may want to serve the students' favorite meal or if you typically offer several meal choices each day, serve the students' favorite menu. Alternatively, you may decide that you want to serve a unique meal to commemorate the occasion.

Ponderosa School, Billings, Montana, celebrated its 2008 HUSSC Gold Award by serving the students' favorite menu along with a greatly expanded salad bar. The food service personnel created an A-Z salad bar by including a fruit, vegetable or legume for each of the 26 letters in the alphabet. To make sure the *extreme* salad bar met their expectations, the staff ordered the unusual items (quince) well ahead of time from Sysco. The staff also borrowed salad bars from nearby schools to accommodate all of the extra food items. Students were extremely enthusiastic. Most sampled and ate far more produce than they typically would have. They seemed most excited about Star Fruit. This tropical treat is light gold in color and genuinely shaped like a 5-pointed star. A list of the fruits and vegetables corresponding to each letter in the alphabet is included in this Appendix. It incorporates many of the produce items Sodexo served in its A-Z salad bar plus additional items you may wish to substitute for some of the letters.

Gallatin Gateway Schools held its HUSSC Gold Award celebration in March 2012 during National School Breakfast Week. The food service staff prepared breakfast for lunch to highlight the importance of breakfast to students' health, well-being and academic success. Eating French toast for lunch delighted the students, staff and adults alike.

Each month students at Luther School, Luther, Montana select an ethnic group or holiday to study. As part of the lesson, the school cook prepares an appropriate ethnic or holiday meal. It was only natural that Luther would choose an ethnic meal to celebrate its HUSSC Gold with Distinction Award. Information about Luther's ethnic meals and links to recipes are included in this Appendix.

Each October, Red Lodge Schools celebrates Farm to School Week by serving a week's worth of meals made from locally grown foods. This concept can be adapted to a HUSSC Award celebration by serving one local meal as part of the event.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

A-Z Salad Bar Suggestions

LETTER	VEGETABLE	FRUIT
A	Artichoke, Asparagus	Apple, Apricot
B	Beans, Beets, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts	Bananas, Berries, Blueberries
C	Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Corn	Canary Melon, Clementine, Coconut
D	Daikon Radish, Dark Leafy Greens	Dates
E	Eggplant, English Peas	Elderberries
F		Fig
G	Garbanzo Beans, Green Pepper	Grape, Grapefruit, Guava
H	Hearts of Palm, Hearts of Romaine	Honeydew
I	Iceberg Lettuce	
J	Jicama, Japanese Eggplant	
K	Kale	Kiwi, Kumquat
L	Lettuce, Leeks, Lentils	Lemon, Lime
M	Mushroom	Mandarin Orange, Mango, Melon
N	Napolitos (preserved prickly pear slices)	Navel Orange, Nectarine
O	Onion, Olives	Orange
P	Parsnip, Potato	Papaya, Pineapple, Pear, Plums, Prunes
Q		Quince
R	Radish, Red Pepper, Romaine Lettuce	Raisins, Raspberries, Red Grapes
S	Spinach, Squash	Strawberries
T	Tomato	Tangerine, Tuscan Melon (like cantaloupe)
U	Upper Cress (a type of watercress)	Ugli (a type of citrus fruit)
V	Vegetable Blend (any frozen/canned veggie mix), Velvet Bean, Vadallia Onion	
W	Wax Beans	Water Chestnuts, Watermelon, Winter Melon
X		Xi Gua (Chinese word for watermelon)
Y	Yam, Yellow Pepper, Yellow Crookneck Squash	Yellow Watermelon
Z	Zucchini	

Serve one item corresponding to each letter of the alphabet.

This A-Z salad bar was created by Sodexho, Billings, MT.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Luther School Ethnic and Cultural Meal Sample Menus and Activities

A Brief History of Ethnic Meals at Luther School, Luther, Montana

Luther School started hosting a monthly ethnic and cultural meal as a way of exposing its students to a wide variety of specific foods and dishes and also as a means of bringing the world - so to speak - right into their classrooms and school. Luther's very first ethnic meal was a Native American themed meal that was served outdoors; students dined sitting on blankets. The menu for that meal consisted of Cornish game hens, wild rice, roasted root vegetables, baked apples and squash, steamed Swiss chard, beef and bison jerky and cornbread. Luther's parent volunteers and cook were inspired by the food court at the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC that has extensive offerings from each geographic region of the U.S. and representing the many Native American tribes across the U.S. Luther School parent, booster and wellness committee member Barbara Dykema notes, "From that day on it was just one exciting idea to the next!!"

Each month a different class hosts the ethnic meal and accompanying presentation. Hosting a meal entails choosing the country, area, or holiday, researching recipes, deciding on a menu and developing a presentation for the lunch hour. Often the students chose an area they were studying in social studies, history or perhaps reading about in the news or for an English assignment. The students and their teacher work with Luther's cook to ensure a balanced and nutritious snack and lunch for the day.

Presentations take many forms: inviting a guest speaker with knowledge of the ethnicity or holiday being studied, presenting fun facts of the region, playing a game or quiz show, performing a mock celebration (once with a full sized Chinese Dragon for Chinese New Year!)...the ideas and options are endless. Luther school has included meals from South Africa, France, East India, Ireland, Italy, Germany, a Dickens inspired Olde English Christmas feast, Egypt, Rome, Mexico and many others. Each was unique, memorable, educational and inspirational.

Following are a few sample menus from Luther's extensive list of ethnic and cultural meals. Many of the recipes were amended to incorporate whole grains, seasonal fruits and vegetables and reasonably priced meat options.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Sample Ethnic Menus and Activities

Nepal

Snack: Momo (steamed dumplings)
Khaps (sweet bread)
Mango & Banana Salad
Yak Butter Tea

Lunch: Beef Curry
Dhal (lentil soup)
Basmati Rice
Chicken Tandoori
Steamed Green Beans
Apple Salad w/Honey Yogurt Dressing
Green Salad w/Oil, Vinegar & Herbs

Activity: We invited a local couple from Nepal to come and speak at lunch and to answer questions from all the students.

Surinam

Snack: Pork Satay
Mangos, Pineapple and Bananas
Vanilla Yogurt
Roasted Cashews
Coconut Milk

Lunch: Mesquite Chicken
Ginger Fried Rice
Goedangan (Cabbage Salad w/Coconut Dressing)
Banana Bread
Fresh Hardboiled Eggs
Nappi Soup

Activity: We invited a student's grandmother who lives and works in Surinam to speak during lunch and to answer questions.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

New Zealand

Snack: Scones & Jam
Rice Pudding
Fresh Fruit Plate (kiwi, dragonfruit, grapefruit)
Vegamite & Crackers
“Kiwi” Eggs (hardboiled eggs)

Lunch: Fish & Chips
Roasted Sweet Potatoes
Lamb Stew
Chicken Strips w/Mango Lime Mayonnaise
Spinach Salad w/Strawberries and Pears
Poohah (sautéed greens)
Cheese Puffs
Pavlova (fruit and custard pie)

Activity: The students presented fun facts about the geography, resources, population, etc. of New Zealand during lunch.

Scandinavia

Snack: Potato Lefse w/Butter & Strawberry Jam
Ligonberry Juice
Scrambled Eggs w/Cream Cheese & Chives

Lunch: Swedish Meatballs
Baked Cod and Haddock
Cabbage Salad (grated cabbage and carrots in a buttermilk dressing)
Split Pea Soup
Yeast Rolls
Apple Crisp

Activity: The students gave a discussion on the St. Lucia Festival of Lights and had a procession of the girls in Scandinavian St. Lucia Festival dress.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Appendix D– HUSSC Award Celebration Press Release

A well-worded press release is a wonderful way to share the good news about your school's HUSSC Award and garner community support for your wellness efforts.

To assure a consistent and accurate message United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition has developed a Press Release Template. Please work with the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and Montana Team Nutrition staff to prepare and approve a press release. MT OPI will help in distributing the press release to media outlets of your choice.

This Appendix contains a copy of the USDA Team Nutrition HUSSC Award Press Release Template. Note that the information highlighted in yellow must appear in the press release that you compose. Three HUSSC Award press releases specific to Montana schools are also included in the Appendix. Note that the press releases from Gallatin Gateway and Townsend are for multiple schools.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

**INSERT SCHOOL LOGO
or
USE SCHOOL STATIONARY**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

_____ (Contact name)

_____ (Title, e.g., School Nutrition Director)

_____ (School name)

_____ (Telephone number)

_____ (Fax number)

_____ (E-mail address)

_____(insert school name)_____ **School meets the HealthierUS School Challenge**

_____(city), _____(state) – _____(date)

_____(insert school name)_____ School is making national news by working to support and improve the health of our children and our community. As part of their effort, healthy items are featured on their menus and physical education and activity emphasized. Their efforts are part of the HealthierUS School Challenge.

The HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary national certification initiative for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. It supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign by recognizing schools that are creating healthier school environments through their promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the initiative encourages all schools take a leadership

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

role in helping students to make healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime. Schools, such as _____(insert name of school)_____, that champion the HUSSC work hard to make changes to their school nutrition environment in order to (1) improve the quality of the foods served, (2) provide students with nutrition education, and (3) provide students with physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

Ultimately, FNS would like to see all schools receive a HUSSC award at any one of the four levels of superior performance: Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold Award of Distinction. Schools awarded receive a monetary incentive (Bronze \$500, Silver \$1000, Gold \$1500, and Gold Award of Distinction \$2000), an award plaque signed by a USDA official, a banner to display in their school, and their name listed on the Team Nutrition Web site.

To qualify for an award, a school must submit a formal application and meet basic criteria set forth by the FNS. The HUSSC criteria reflect the recommendations of the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) published recommendations (April 2007) for foods that should be served in schools, outside of the organized school lunch meals. HealthierUS Schools must also have a local school wellness policy, as mandated by Congress. Schools receiving a HUSSC award commit to meeting the criteria throughout their four year certification period.

The _____(insert school name)_____ School qualified for the _____(insert award level)_____. USDA's _____(insert name and title)_____ will visit _____(insert school name)_____ School on _____(date)_____ to present the official award.

Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration

The HUSSC application process was led by (Name and title) . A team of school professionals and a representative of the parent organization reviewed the application and included (names) . Special recognition is also due to the school nutrition staff for their efforts in achieving school lunch menu changes leading to a HUSSC (Insert award type) award.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 26, 2012

Contacts: Allyson Hagen, OPI, 406-444-3160, ahagen2@mt.gov
Therese Picasso Edwards, RD, Luther School Wellness Committee Member
406-446-2480, theresepicasso@gmail.com

**Luther School Celebrates National Healthy Schools Award
*Small School First in Montana to Receive Gold Award with Distinction***

(Luther, MT) Luther School improved on their previously earned Silver HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) certification to become the first school in Montana to receive the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold with Distinction Award in recognition of its outstanding commitment to student health. The Gold Award with Distinction is the highest level possible for this national award. Luther School will receive a \$2,000 monetary award from the United States Department of Agriculture for their success.

Said Superintendent Juneau, "Healthy students are better prepared for success in the classroom. Luther School is helping students develop healthier eating and physical activity choices that will last a lifetime."

Luther School, a small school with 30 students, is one of thirteen schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006. The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity.

Luther's school menu features colorful, healthy items prepared from scratch using fresh, local foods. Amy Russell, the School Food Service Director, does it all - from creating the monthly menu, to trying new recipes, grocery shopping, serving meals and cleaning up. Luther students enjoy a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods daily.

Janis Eckert, Luther's Lead Teacher, states, "Healthy eating habits are the foundation for an optimum learning environment. It is wonderful that the parents, students, and staff are recognizing the multiple benefits associated with a nutritious lunch program. We, as a school community, are proud to be the first in Montana to obtain this goal."

Opportunities for physical activity are woven into all areas of the curriculum, not just physical education class. Students participate in lifetime activities such as downhill skiing, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, walking and bicycling.

The rigorous HUSSC application process was led by a local dietitian and School Wellness Committee Member, Therese Picasso Edwards, the School Food Service Director, Amy Russell,

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

with support from Lead Teacher Janis Eckert and other Wellness Committee Members including Barbara Dykema and Margie Adams.

Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Luther School on Friday, April 27th, 2012 from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. and participate in a school-wide celebration. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration.

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A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2012

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**Gallatin Gateway School Celebrates National
Healthy Schools Gold-Level Award**

(Gallatin Gateway, MT) Gallatin Gateway School in Gallatin Gateway, Montana, joined an exclusive national group last month, earning two prestigious Gold Awards in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) program.

The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity. Gallatin Gateway School is one of eleven schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006. Dr. DeBruycker, said, "Our school is excited to be receiving these two awards. I am so proud of the healthy lifestyle habits being taught by our staff and in turn, displayed by our students."

Superintendent Juneau said, "Schools receiving these awards are models for schools across the state because they demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellness of Montana children. Children who eat healthy meals and are active are better prepared for success in the classroom."

To qualify for the Gold award, Gallatin Gateway School submitted two detailed applications documenting adherence to the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for their lunch menus, nutrition education, opportunities for physical activity, and a local school wellness policy. Dr. Kimberly DeBruycker, Superintendent, and Chef Jason Moore, Food Service Manager led the HUSSC application process, along with broad-based support from the school's health and physical activity staff including Mrs. Elizabeth Matthews, Mr. Mike Coon, and Mr. Joe Mohr. The school will receive \$3000 from USDA to support their school meals program. One award is for the K-6 meals program and the other for the 7-8 meals program.

Gallatin Gateway school meals are prepared from scratch with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods. Chef Moore and assistant cook/head baker Mrs. Bobbi Jo Gunderson serve tasty meals, which the students eat and enjoy. "These are not your ordinary or traditional school meals!" Chef Jason Moore stated. "We survey our students and work to prepare the kind of healthy meals they will enjoy."

This school is remarkable for its exceptional approach to making mealtime at school pleasant for both students and adults. The mealtime atmosphere is just as important as the meal itself. Gallatin Gateway School has created a comfortable cafeteria in which students and adults enjoy mealtime together and students learn to become competent eaters. Gallatin Gateway School is featured in a national training DVD, *Comfortable Cafeterias*,

http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/MTTeam.html#gpm1_7

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A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

The high priority placed on physical activity and physical education along with innovative programs to increase students' physical activity were another key reason for the Gold recognition of Gallatin Gateway School. Health enhancement teachers, Mr. Mohr and Mr. Coon, have been instrumental in creating fun ways to get kids up and moving, such as school-wide fit days, walk to school days, get-fit activities and more. Both intramural and interscholastic sport options are available for students in grades 5-8.

Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Gallatin Gateway School on Tuesday, March 6, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. and participate in a school-wide celebration with a special lunch meal following. In celebration of National School Breakfast Week, Gallatin Gateway School will be serving a student favorite – *Breakfast for Lunch*. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration and lunch.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2012

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Townsend Schools Celebrate National Healthy Schools Award

(Townsend, MT) Cecelia Hazelton Elementary School and Townsend Junior High School in Townsend, Montana, joined an exclusive national group last month, earning prestigious Silver Awards in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) program.

The HealthierUS School Challenge program recognizes schools that are creating healthy environments by promoting excellence in nutrition and physical activity. Townsend Schools are one of nine schools in Montana to receive a HUSSC award since 2006.

Superintendent Juneau said, "Schools receiving these awards are models for schools across the state because they demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellness of Montana children. Children who eat healthy meals and are active are better prepared for success in the classroom."

To qualify for the Silver award, Townsend Schools submitted a detailed application documenting adherence to the HealthierUS School Challenge criteria for their lunch menus, nutrition education, opportunities for physical activity, and a local school wellness policy. The HUSSC application process was led by Vicki Thomason, School Food Service Director. Townsend School lunches offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables through a daily salad and fruit bar, low fat dairy foods, lean protein choices and whole grain foods.

Brad Racht, Townsend Junior High Principal said, "We are very proud of this award. Mrs. Thomason and her staff have worked very hard to provide healthy lunch options for our students. She is consistently trying to improve the lunch program and seeks student input." He continued, "Our entire teaching staff has demonstrated a commitment to physical activity and healthy choices."

Stated Townsend Superintendent Andrea Johnson, "Healthy nutrition and physical activity are both extremely important for our students to feel good and learn. I am excited that the district met the criteria for the Silver Awards – now we can work for the Gold!"

The high priority placed on physical activity and physical education along with innovative programs to increase students' physical activity were another key reason for the Silver recognition of Townsend Schools. Health enhancement teacher Vicki Harvey has been instrumental in creating fun ways to get kids up and moving, such as school-wide fit days. Both intramural and interscholastic sport options are available for students in Grades 6-8.

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A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

Montana Office of Public Instruction officials will present the award to Townsend Schools on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, 2:00-2:55 p.m. in the new high school gym and participate in a school-wide celebration. Parents and community members are invited to attend the award celebration.

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**Celebrating Your Success:
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Appendix E- HUSSC Award Celebration Sample Agenda/Program

When developing your agenda be sure to block out the amount of time you estimate each part of the celebration will take to be sure you do not under or over plan.

The agenda should list:

- Each phase of the celebration (i.e., introduction, speakers, performances if applicable)
- Master of ceremonies
- Guest speakers
- Honored guests
- Staff members and volunteers whose efforts made the award possible. Please double check correct spelling and pronunciation of names.

The agenda/program can become part of the media kit you provide to any media who are reporting on your celebration. The kit should also include a copy of the approved Press Release, contact information for someone at your school who can answer any questions the reporter may have and a copy of your school's rules regarding photographing students.

**Celebrating Your Success:
A Step-by-Step Guide To Planning an HUSSC Award Celebration**

**March 6, 2012
10:00 am – 11:00 am**

**HealthierUS School Challenge
GOLD Award Ceremony
Gallatin Gateway Sample Agenda**

Star Spangler Banner

Opening – by Superintendent

- Introductions of guests
- Presentation of GGS Staff
- Welcome – Surprise Guest
- Welcome School Food Service Staff

Montana Team Nutrition or Montana Office of Public Instruction Representative lead the presentation of HUSSC Award.

Photos can be taken of the award recipients with the award certificate.

- 4th Grade – Presentation to Head Cook
- 5th Grade – Presentation to Assistant Cook
- 1st Grade – Song: *You Can Try New Foods*
- 2nd Grade – Breakfast Rap
- 3rd Grade – Exercise! Try It!
- Middle School Skit – A View of the Cafeteria

Special Guest Speakers:

Can include School Wellness Committee Members, School Board Members, local and state Senators and Representatives

Some schools work in some physical activity/movement if desired.

Assembly ends with All School Song – *Big Old Tree*

Join in the fun – everyone participates ☺